

Though the beauty of God's Kingdom seemed very evident to me, I found that most people I met with were struggling with their full acceptance of it. In all honesty, I understood this problem, as there are so many distractions and confusions that confront us in this life. I had difficulty in enabling others to see past the "veil"<sup>1</sup> that covers their perspective of the glory of God in this broken and seemingly chaotic world. They stumble<sup>2</sup> over short-term personal concerns and cannot see the full picture of God's Goodness. They "busyness" of life overwhelms them. And God knows that the universe groans with this brokenness as well<sup>3</sup>.

The power of Jesus coming to this earth is the most convincing tool that I have to work with against this problem. He was not a God that viewed us only from a distance because He was so very busy running the universe. He allowed himself to be constrained when He emptied Himself and was poured into human form<sup>4</sup> – even as a small baby who had to grow up as we do. *It was not a quick visit to show us His power – it was an extended stay to show us His love.*

In living His life alongside ours, He therefore became able to truly identify with our problems, and understand completely that we do not know what we are doing<sup>5</sup>. There is an emphasis on the fact that He was tempted and did not sin<sup>6</sup>, but we must also see that He is able to empathize with us about the difficulty of our lives. He was like a sponge (with infinite capacity) in absorbing the knowledge of our griefs and struggles while He lived on this earth as a man.

Jesus never really explained the nature of bad things that happen to us except to proclaim that they are not directly related to individual sin<sup>7</sup> (as is the popular belief). I remember that He spoke in response to a very pointed question about some Galileans who had been killed and their blood mixed with their sacrifices. Jesus made it clear that this terrible act was not due to those people being worse sinners than others<sup>8</sup>, but He did not comment on the fact that God allowed this evil to happen. He brought another disaster into the discussion as well, mentioning the eighteen that died when the tower of Siloam fell on them<sup>9</sup>. Again He denied that this was especially due to their sin, and made no comment on the cause of the disaster itself. He simply moved on to motivate the crowd to repent of their own sins and pursue God.

It is interesting to compare this to the manner in which God spoke to Job<sup>10</sup> about his own personal disaster. In the scriptures, God never explains the part that Satan had to play in this event. But my Jewish brothers know very well that such evil in our lives has its roots in attacks by this adversary.

When on another occasion a man came to Jesus, distressed nearly out of his mind with a child that was constantly being attacked by demon-induced life-threatening seizures, Jesus simply told Him to believe<sup>11</sup>. The man answered that he believed (to some extent), but needed help to overcome his significant amount of unbelief<sup>12</sup>. None of us have enough belief – we all need increase our faith to be able to deal with the confusion and distraction of life.

I am concerned that apparently few really "get it"<sup>13</sup>, but I know and trust in the fairness and love of God. And I have this image of God with a tear in His eye saying, "Look at how beautiful are those who do!"<sup>14</sup>

1. see 2 Corinthians 3:13-16
2. see Matthew 18:7
3. Romans 8:22
4. Philippians 2:5-11

5. Luke 23:34
6. Hebrews 4:15
7. John 9:2ff
8. Luke 13:1-3
9. Luke 13:4
10. Job 38ff
11. Mark 9:17-25
12. Mark 9:24
13. Matthew 7:14
14. for instance, Psalm 147:11 – “the Lord delights in those who fear him, who put their hope in his unfailing love.”

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